

MINUTES

**McDowell Sonoran Preserve Commission
1st Floor Community Development Conference Room
Thursday, May 1, 2003
5:00 P.M.**

CALL TO ORDER

Commissioner Smith called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m., noting the presence of a quorum.

ATTENDANCE

Present: Darren Smith, Chairman
 Denny Carr
 Erik Filsinger
 Laura Fisher
 Christine Kovach
 Howard Myers
 Arnold Roy

Absent: Les Conklin
 Virginia Korte
 Solange Whitehead
 Don Ruff

Staff: Bob Cafarella
 Claire Miller
 Don Meserve

Visitors: Carla
 Jane Rau
 Bill Berkley

Chairman Smith expressed his thanks to Carla, Ms. Rau, and Mr. Berkley, as outgoing Commissioners, for all of their work on behalf of the Commission.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner Carla called attention to a spelling correction on page six of the March 6 minutes, noting that the correct spelling was Phoebe *Pevear*. She also made the following corrections to the April 3 minutes:

Page 2, paragraph 2: "...*Parks* Division of Community Services.", and

Page 3, paragraph 2: "Commissioner Carla stated that Mr. Gross had done a *thorough* job..."

ON MOTION MADE BY COMMISSIONER MYERS AND SECOND BY COMMISSIONER FISHER, THE MARCH 6 AND APRIL 3, 2003 MINUTES WERE APPROVED AS CORRECTED. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY BY A VOTE OF 7-0.

HIDDEN HILLS ACCESS AREA CONCEPTS AND ISSUES

Mr. Cafarella summarized the Hidden Hills issue for the Commission with respect to the planned access area. He pointed out that as this access area is the first of nine to have access area amenities, it is very important. He explained that in 1998, the provision of this access area was stipulated in a zoning case, and that the developer, SunCor, identified specific locations to accommodate the access needs. The locations for the access areas were identified with signs. The City owns both access sites, and was given an easement from private open space into the McDowell Preserve. Mr. Cafarella added that the City is partnering with Community Services on the Trail Head, which, while serving the Preserve, will also serve a regional trail outside of the Preserve.

Mr. Cafarella stated that Hidden Hills Community Facilities District (CFD) has provided \$100,000 for the project, together with an \$189,000 Heritage Fund Grant, and \$30,000 from AZ Game and Fish. The remainder of the funds necessary for project completion would be provided from the voter approved 2000 Capital GO Bond. He added that the project also includes the construction of Sunrise Trail.

Commissioner Myers expressed concern as to the limited amount of parking. Mr. Cafarella replied that spaces, as planned, seemed to represent the maximum, when combined with the physical constraints of the site and SunCor's requirements. Commissioner discussion ensued relative to overflow parking.

Mr. Cafarella went on to explain the amenities that will be provided, noting that a ramada for shade would be constructed, with an interpretive display featuring the local fauna. Rest rooms and water fountains for humans, dogs and horses, signage gates and safety lighting are also planned. He added that the parking would accommodate equestrian use as well.

Mr. Cafarella discussed the issues raised by residents opposing the access areas, and referred to the handout describing those issues in detail. He also reviewed several of the options raised at meetings with area interests. Mr. Cafarella stated that the first required public meeting on the issue would take place at the end of May, but explained that staff has made every effort to contact and discuss the issues with all interested parties. He noted that this matter is on the Council agenda for June 16, and stressed the importance of Commissioner communication with individual City Council members regarding this issue.

In response to a question by Commissioner Kovach, Mr. Cafarella stated that it was hoped that the access site would be under construction by the beginning of 2004. Commissioner Myers asked about traffic data. Mr. Cafarella replied that on the weekends, the average number of vehicles was in the low 60s, evenings in the 50s and mornings, between 13 and 16 cars, but cautioned that these were just preliminary figures. He added that a trail counter is being employed on Lost Dog Trail and that some good statistics would be available from that source.

Commissioner Myers asked about the total funds earmarked for this project. Mr. Cafarella replied that roughly \$300,000 and that the only funds not specifically earmarked for the project were the Game and Fish funds. Carla noted that the Heritage funds could be lost if not utilized soon.

Commissioner Carr inquired as to integration of bike paths and paved trails by the Transportation Department into the maps. Mr. Cafarella indicated that those changes would be included with the revised Trails Plan.

In summary, Mr. Cafarella requested that the Commissioners read the information provided in the handout.

AD HOC FUNDING COMMITTEE

Mr. Cafarella noted that a lot of work has been done on the poll questions to ascertain what people think about the Preserve management and what type of funding they would prefer, sales' tax or property tax. He noted that the poll would occur the following week, and that results would be presented to the Commission as soon as possible.

PLANNING COMMITTEE

Carla stated that the Planning Committee would be meeting to finalize the Trail change recommendations to the Commission. She underscored that it was important that all the Commissioners had a chance to provide their input, and to respond to Ms. Miller if they had not already done so.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Mr. Cafarella indicated that he had no further comments to make. Mr. Meserve stated that the joint meeting with the Parks and Recreation Commission was scheduled for June 5 in the Pinnacle Room at the Human Resources location.

PRESERVE MANAGER'S REPORT

Ms. Miller advised the Commission that MCDOT was in the process of identifying some potential corridors for the regional trail system, and reviewed some of those corridors. She noted that they would do nothing that would change any of the Preserve's existing trail plans.

Ms. Miller stated that the second Earth Day Project went well. She explained that about 40 people participated and that a thirty-ton dumpster was filled with trash. She noted that the Geocaching information has been posted on the city Web site. She added that Steve Gross had been very helpful in having the geocaches removed. Ms. Miller stated that the Spring Steward class would graduate on Saturday.

Ms. Miller announced that she has been working closely with the State Land Department and that Tammy Pike, whose position has unfortunately been eliminated, has dedicated some leftover funds to the Preserve to help sign some of the trails. She explained that about \$20,000 worth of signage, materials, and kiosks have been implemented. Ms. Miller went on to explain the format

and placement of the signs. She also stated that Ms. Pike has a new position with the Tonto National Forest.

FUTURE EXECUTIVE SESSION

MOTION WAS MADE BY COMMISSIONER SMITH TO HOLD AN EXECUTIVE SESSION FOR JUNE 5, 2003 FOR THE PURPOSE OF DISCUSSION WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF THE PUBLIC BODY AND CONSULTATION WITH CITY ATTORNEY FOR LEGAL ADVICE TO CONSIDER ITS POSITION AND INSTRUCT ITS REPRESENTATIVES REGARDING NEGOTIATING FOR PURCHASE OR LEASE OF REAL PROPERTY FOR INCLUSION IN THE MCDOWELL SONORAN PRESERVE, ARS38-431.03 (A) (3) AND (A) (7). THE MOTION WAS SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER MYERS AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY, 7-0.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS AND PUBLIC COMMENTS

Commissioner Kovach inquired as to reactivating the promotion and publicity sub committee. Chairman Smith stated that he felt that sub committee would be necessary as the Commission moves forward relative to what it is putting in front of the citizens. There was a brief discussion and it was decided to add reactivating the sub committee as a future agenda item.

Carla distributed fliers about a film about growth and a discussion panel with the new State Land Commissioner on May 13, at Harkins Theater. She also expressed thanks on behalf of the McDowell Sonoran Land Trust for everyone's help and support with the first preservation party.

AGENDA ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

Chairman Smith mentioned the gateway issues and questioned the timing of brining that issue before City Council. Mr. Cafarella stated that he would include a discussion of that item in his June Director's Report. Commissioner Carr expressed his appreciation for the E-mail updates from staff and requested that they continue with those updates.

Being duly moved and seconded, the regular meeting was adjourned at 6:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

"For the Record" Reporters

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